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TAB S

"29. The psychological impact of air attacks which have caused civilian casualties and damage in NVN." (S)

STAG Comment: (TS) In early May, DIA noted an emerging consensus of opinion among US Embassy officials in Saigon and western diplomatic observers that NVN public opinion against the air strikes and determination of the NVN populace to continue the fight in SVN was hardening and becoming more militant. In general, the populace seemed to be responding to increased military and political control imposed by Hanoi as a result of the strikes.

25X1 [] have indicated [] their hatred of 25X1
US imperialists; although [] expressed fear of the bombing, none 25X1
gave any indication that their government should modify its position. In
25X1 mid-June [] the mood in that city
was considerably more relaxed than in March. Civil defense actions in
Haiphong area had leveled off. There was no additional digging of bunkers
In July, DIA reported that the DRV continued propaganda efforts to convince
the populace that US aircraft were aiming not at military targets but at
civilian population and institutions (e.g., strafing hospitals and
dwellings). In August, DRV continued to express their determination to
continue in spite of the increase of US and SVN forces. While continued
confidence in victory was expressed, DRV officials began to place consider-
able emphasis on propaganda about the probable long duration of the
struggle. In summary, the apparent effect of the air strikes on the popu-
lace has been to stiffen their resolve to carry on. There have undoubtedly
been civilian casualties but there is no accurate assessment of these
casualties. The bombing has caused evacuation of some critical or vital
areas and there has been extensive damage; however, there are no indications
that there is any public sentiment toward changing the course of action of
the DRV government.

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